

THE
PERKINS INSTITUTION
AND
MASSACHUSETTS
ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND.



ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE TRUSTEES,
1840.

FROM THE PRESS OF JOHN H. EASTBURN.

E I G H T H
A N N U A L R E P O R T
O F
T H E T R U S T E E S
O F T H E
P E R K I N S I N S T I T U T I O N
A N D
M A S S A C H U S E T T S
A S Y L U M F O R T H E B L I N D,
T O T H E
C O R P O R A T I O N .

B O S T O N :
J O H N H . E A S T B U R N , P R I N T E R ,
N o . 1 8 S t a t e S t r e e t .

1840.

ANNUAL REPORT.

TO THE CORPORATORS OF THE PERKINS INSTITUTION AND
MASSACHUSETTS ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND.

GENTLEMEN,

It again becomes our duty in conformity to law and usage, to render you an account of the administration of the Institution for the past year.

It is peculiarly gratifying to state generally, that the inmates have been in excellent health; that they have continued to make progress in their various studies, and to acquire greater skill in mechanical labors.

Previously, however, to describing the internal economy of the Institution, it is our duty to render an account of our management of its general interests.

The most important act on our part has been the exchange of the estate in Pearl Street, for the spacious and beautifully located edifice known as the Mount Washington House, at South Boston.

This important step was taken after long and careful deliberation; after consulting the best friends of the Institution; and finally after obtaining the sanction of a special vote of the Corporation. The act was an unanimous one on our part, having the approval of those members who are appointed by the State authorities.

The terms of the transaction were, an even exchange of the land and buildings in Pearl Street, for the lot on which the Mount Washington House is situate, with all its buildings, being an enclosure of 55,000 feet—and also a lot situate on the opposite side of Broadway, containing 20,000 feet.

The considerations which induced us to make the exchange were, *first*, the greater salubrity of the location at South Boston; the advantages of unobstructed streets and open grounds in the neighborhood; and the facilities for sea bathing :

2d, the spaciousness and convenience of the edifice, which offered large and airy halls for school rooms, music rooms, and work-shops, and numerous apartments for dormitories; and the opportunity of making convenient and extensive, but entirely separate arrangements for each sex under the same roof.

3d, the prospective interests of the Institution, which demand facilities for accommodating a greater number of pupils than could be had in the Pearl Street estate, because the rapid increase of business there, not only made it inconvenient for the blind to move about the streets, but raised the value of the surrounding land so much as to render an extension of the premises almost hopeless.

4th, the extraordinary opportunity of obtaining for a third of its value a situation combining the advantages of a city and country location, and an edifice, [which cost \$110,000,] just such as the friends of the Institution would desire, but which the most sanguine would never have dared to propose.

5th, the advice of all the friends of the Institution, but especially of that munificent individual who must ever be considered especially as its patron, and who

has literally given to it, "a local habitation and a name."

We may mention here, that the interest which this gentleman continued to manifest in the affairs of the Institution, and the cheerful manner in which he waived his right to object to any disposition of the Pearl Street estate, confirmed us in the desire to connect his name perpetually with it. The removal of the establishment seemed also to present a proper occasion for effecting this purpose, and by our recommendation, a vote of the Corporation has changed the name to that of the "PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND."

This name also expresses clearly the object and character of the establishment; for every day's experience confirms the opinion that not only is a school wanted for the Blind, but an Asylum also to be connected with it, for those who cannot be provided for by their friends, or by themselves, [even after they are educated,] and where they may be placed at work, and earn their own subsistence, in whole or in part, aided by having rent free, the use of tools, and credit for stock. But upon this subject we shall enlarge afterwards.

We have stated that a careful consideration of all the arguments for and against a removal to South Boston, convinced us that it would be on the whole very advantageous, and we are happy to state that the result of eight months experience confirms all our hopes, and dissipates most of our fears. The inmates were removed in May last; they have experienced therefore both summer heats, and winter storms.

During the summer months the situation is most

delightful, and at the noon-tide heats of the warmest days, it enjoys a cool and pleasant temperature.

During winter, thus far, the house has been kept very comfortable by means of furnaces, which being constructed upon scientific principles, warm the apartments without vitiating the air.

Connected with the boys school room is a gymnasium, which is provided with a bowling alley, and the usual fixtures for gymnastic exercises. Twice every day, in winter, the boys go through with a series of exercises, which develope the muscular system, and give strength and activity to the whole body. During the summer and autumn, they bathe daily in the sea, and many of them have learned to swim.

On the whole then, we are highly gratified with the change of location, and there is only one of the anticipations which we had formed that has not been fulfilled, viz. that of raising by subscription a sum sufficient to cover the expenses of altering and fitting up the house, without drawing upon the Treasury. Several zealous friends undertook to solicit subscriptions, but the peculiar nature of the times prevented much success, and only \$2,005 were obtained, while the total expense has been much greater.

No person however, can regret the outlay, after going over the establishment, viewing the spacious and well ventilated school rooms, the music halls, the work shops and the dormitories, and considering that it is to be the school for the blind of New England for generations to come.

We subjoin a list of the generous contributors to this fund;* but we should do injustice to ourselves were we to refrain from alluding to the part taken by

*Appendix A.

the President of the Corporation, Mr. Samuel Appleton, who besides warmly advocating the exchange, generously subscribed one thousand dollars towards effecting it.

To another individual also, is due our grateful acknowledgments—to one who, learning that the Institution needed an organ suitable to its spacious music hall, ordered his agent to place three thousand dollars at our disposal for that special purpose—but with the condition that his name should be concealed: accidental circumstances however having disclosed it, we but confirm the voice of good report, when we name Mr. George Lee as the generous donor.

We have been thus particular in our account of the change of location, not only that the Corporation might understand the whole of the transaction, but that the public might be informed of the superior advantages which the Institution can now offer to blind persons from different parts of the country, and the various walks of life.

There are cases where young persons, especially young ladies, becoming blind, would not resort to a public establishment unless they could have separate apartments and attendance, and special instruction; to such our Institution can now offer every accommodation.

With regard to the internal history of the Institution, we have little to report which would be new to you. The same system of intellectual studies, the cultivation of music, and physical labor which was detailed in former reports, has been followed during the last year.

The general rule is, that each pupil shall devote part of every day to study, and music, and to manual labor. To this rule there are a few exceptions, and but

a few. A small number work all the time, and three boys devote all their time to intellectual pursuits and to music.

It enters not into our system to teach more than the common school branches of education, but in special cases, and where the friends of the pupils desire it, we are prepared to teach the higher branches. During the past year, Algebra and Geometry have been studied by some, and three boys have made considerable progress in Latin and Greek.

We may mention as a measure of the intellectual standard among the boys, that they have of their own accord formed a Lyceum, which meets regularly every week, and in which they discuss questions with much interest and considerable ingenuity.

The progress of the pupils generally in the common studies of reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and grammar, has been very satisfactory.

There is one whose situation is so peculiar, and whose case is so interesting in a philosophical point of view, that we cannot forbear making particular mention of it; we allude to Laura Bridgman, the deaf, dumb, and blind girl, mentioned in the two last Reports.

The intellectual improvement of this interesting being, and the progress she has made in expressing her ideas is truly gratifying.

She uses the manual alphabet of the deaf mutes, with great facility and great rapidity; she has increased her vocabulary so as to comprehend the names of all common objects; she uses adjectives expressive of positive qualities, such as hard, soft, sweet, sour, &c.; verbs expressive of action, as give, take, ride, run, &c., in the present, past and future tense; she connects adjectives with nouns to express

their qualities; she introduces verbs into sentences and connects them by conjunctions; for instance, a gentleman having given her an apple, she said *man give Laura sweet apple*.

She can count to high numbers; she can add and subtract small numbers.

But the most gratifying acquirement which she has made, and the one which has given her the most delight, is the power of *writing a legible hand*, and expressing her thoughts upon paper: she writes with a pencil in a grooved line, and makes her letters clear and distinct.

She was sadly puzzled at first to know the meaning of the process to which she was subjected, but when the idea dawned upon her mind, that by means of it she could convey intelligence to her mother, her delight was unbounded. She applied herself with great diligence, and in a few months actually wrote a legible letter to her mother, in which she conveyed information of her being well, and of her coming home in ten weeks. It was indeed, only the skeleton of a letter, but still it expressed in legible characters, a vague outline of the ideas which were passing in her mind. She was very impatient to have *the man* carry this letter, for she supposed that the utmost limit of the Post Office Department was to employ a man to run backward and forward between our Institution and the different towns where the pupils live, to fetch and carry letters. We subjoin to this Report an exact *fac simile* of Laura's writing, observing that she was not prompted to the matter, and that her hand was not held in the execution; the matter is quite original, and the chirography is entirely her own.

She has improved very much in personal appearance

as well as in intellect; her countenance beams with intelligence; she is always active at study, work, or play; she never repines, and most of the time is gay and frolicksome.

She is now very expert with her needle, she knits very easily, and can make twine bags and various fancy articles, very prettily. She is very docile, has a quick sense of propriety, dresses herself with great neatness, and is always correct in her deportment. In short, it would be difficult to find a child in the possession of all her senses, and the enjoyment of the advantages that wealth and parental love can bestow, who is more contented and cheerful, or to whom existence seems a greater blessing than it does to this bereaved creature, for whom the sun has no light, the air no sound, and the flowers no color or smell.

For the method of teaching her, and for further particulars of her case, we refer you to Appendix B.

The department of music still continues under the charge of Mr. Keller, and the pupils have generally improved in such a manner as to be creditable to him and advantageous to themselves.

The acquisition of a noble organ; the exchange of old piano fortes for those of the best tone and finish; and the addition of several instruments to the orchestra, have given a new impulse to this department.

The working department has continued steadily in operation, and received additional patronage from the public.

It has paid its own expenses, including stock, and \$400 wages to blind persons, [once pupils,] and the rent of a shop in Washington street. We do not include however in the expenses the board of the pupils.

For the amount of work done, during the year, we refer you to Appendix C.

In this connection, we may make some observations upon the prospective want of an establishment connected with, or supplementary to our own, which shall offer a home and an occupation to those who have finished their education.

There are very serious objections to having adult blind persons introduced promiscuously into an establishment destined for the education of children. The effects upon each class are bad, for reasons which will be obvious to any thinking person.

But it often happens that a laboring man is suddenly bereft of his sight by accident; he is deprived of all means of support, and his situation is much more unhappy than that of one born blind. If all schools for the blind are closed to him, his only refuge is the alms house.

Again, there are now in this country five Institutions for the instruction of the Blind. Every year there will be discharged from them a few individuals, some of whom cannot gain a livelihood by themselves, but might earn enough to pay for their own board, to clothe themselves, and to have a spare penny for the extra comforts of life. Take for instance the case of a young man who is expert at making mattresses, a most excellent business, but requiring capital: he can earn four or five dollars a week, at journeyman's wages; but suppose he attempts to set up for himself, he must buy his materials at retail prices, he must sell his goods as soon as manufactured, for he cannot command his price by holding on through the autumn and winter for the spring trade, and in a short time he fails. We have known more than one such case.

Considerations of this kind, have made some friends of the blind desirous of founding of a central estab-

lishment for the *Industrious Blind*, from various parts of the country. It should be an establishment to which any could be admitted who could earn enough to pay their board and clothe themselves; and where they could work by piece work, and be paid at regular periods. They should be subjected to no more restrictions than were absolutely necessary for good order and correct morals; and be left to pass their leisure hours as best suited them.

Such an establishment, well conducted, would be open to none of the objections which apply to the *Quinze Vingt*, or Asylum for three hundred blind at Paris, on which some remarks were made in a former Report.

There will be a few, however, who from physical or mental imbecility, will be unable to support, or even take care of themselves; and, hard as it may seem, such persons should be returned to their relatives, or if they have none, should be committed to the charge of their respective towns. The permanent residence of such persons in a school for the education of children, or in an establishment for industrious blind, is necessarily a positive evil; the effect upon the other inmates, especially on those who are only a grade above them in intellect, is very bad.

That this unfortunate class has even stronger claims upon humanity than the others, is manifest; for the lower the standard of intellect, the greater should be the effort to raise it: but it should be made in such way that none will be injured by it.

It would be necessary to adhere rigidly to the rule of making some individuals or some town, be responsible for the removal of any inmate, who should prove an improper subject, or who should become

vicious, or incapable of work. Otherwise, in a few years the establishment would become burdened with imbeciles, and degenerate into an alms house.

The necessity for such an establishment is becoming every day more and more apparent: there are at this moment, some of our own former pupils who would gladly avail themselves of one.

The acquisition of the estate at South Boston, puts it in the power of our Institution to commence such an establishment within its own premises, but yet separate from the school for young blind. It would be necessary, however, to go to the expense of several thousand dollars in the outset, and this consideration in the present low state of our funds, has prevented us from undertaking it. It is to be hoped however, that some generous individual may be found who will endow such an establishment with sufficient funds for going into operation; once in operation it will, with good management, support itself.

Our Institution would then be complete in all its parts; it would educate blind children, and send them out to their parents and friends, prepared to push their own way in the world; and for those who have no home or friends, it would open an Asylum in which they could earn their own livelihood, exempt from all feeling of dependance, and enjoy as much happiness in life, as their infirmity would permit.

In the Printing Department, we regret to say, not much has been done during the past year.

At the period of the last Report, the press had been stopped entirely, and it remained at rest during the greater part of the year.

Several efforts have been made, to obtain means for printing a series of books, as yet however without success.

Quite recently the press has been put in operation, for the purpose of executing special works.

A gentleman whose daughter had become blind, was very desirous of giving her some knowledge of the latin language, and generously offered to defray the principal expense of printing a small edition of some simple latin work. A selection was made of the *Viri Romae*, and it has been executed in very beautiful style. We have now in press, an edition of *Pierce's Geometry*, which will be of very great value to the blind, for they delight in the study of mathematics, and this work being accompanied by embossed plates will enable them to pursue the study of Geometry unaided by seeing persons.

These two works therefore may be added to the catalogue published in the Report of last year.

In this work the plan of using contractions and stenographic characters formerly proposed by our Director has been followed, and it will be found that each page contains one fifth more matter than is contained in the most recent European books.

But while we regret that we have not been able to do more in this interesting department, we rejoice for the sake of the blind that the impulse given to it by our former efforts have caused it to advance elsewhere. When the subject of printing was first taken up by our Director, not one step towards improvement upon the original invention of the Abbè Haüy, had been made: fifty years had elapsed, and in France and in England, the printing for the blind was still in the same clumsy, bulky, and enormously expensive style, while in Germany it had really deteriorated. By at once reducing the bulk of the letters, diminishing the thickness of the sheets, and condensing the whole, he showed clearly that the

books could be made even more legible, while they were but one quarter the size and expense.

After four years experience had proved the advantage of this method, the change was adopted in England and Scotland, not with precisely the same form of letter indeed, but in the great principle. The Glasgow Institution especially, began to issue a series of books, which will be of great value to the blind. The Government of England, with a laudable desire to promote the cause of humanity, has recently appropriated the sum of £400 sterling to one establishment, to aid in printing more books for the blind.

The Philadelphia Institution is also aiding in the good work; and while we rejoice in the munificent endowment which it has lately received, we indulge the hope that it will benefit the blind of the whole country by printing a series of well selected books.

We shall have little reason to regret that our Institution cannot continue to take the lead in this humane undertaking, provided the blind obtain the books from some other quarter.

It is to be feared, however, that without the zealous co-operation of all the Institutions, and without generous rivalry among them, the progress both of printing books and improving the method, will be slow; and could our press be kept in operation, either by the liberality of individuals or the patronage of government, we cannot but think great good would result.

If the legislatures of each of the New England States would appropriate a small sum for this specific purpose, upon the condition of every blind person in the State who could read being supplied gratuitously with a copy of each work printed, it would give an impetus to the undertaking which would ensure the

end so often and so warmly urged by our Director, a select library of general literature for the blind.

Our country would then have the laudable gratification of being the first to do its duty, by supplying intellectual light to those who, in the wise Providence of God, are left in physical darkness, and thrown upon the sympathy of their more favored fellows.

Among many interesting proofs of the good effects of printing for the blind, we may mention the following facts, which have recently come to our knowledge.

An English missionary in India, received a specimen of printing in one of our Reports, he showed it to a poor English soldier who had become blind—the man soon learned to read it, and rested not until he obtained a copy of the Testament.

Miss ——— carried some of our books to England, and one of them fell into the hands of a blind woman who gained a livelihood by washing—notwithstanding the nature of her occupation, she soon learned to read, and now takes great delight in doing so.

Applications for books have been received from various parts of this country and from England, for blind persons who have learned to read at home.

We have also been solicited to receive from China two blind girls, who had been taught English. Mr. Gutzlaff, who made the application, supposed that if they should be educated and taught to do various kinds of work, they would prove of great benefit to their countrymen on their return.

However much we approved the benevolent purpose of the applicant, we did not feel authorized to divert the funds of the Institution from the youth of our country.

We may remark in connection with the subject of printing, that some improvements have been made during the year, in the construction of apparatus for teaching the blind: a new chart, shewing the course of historical events on the plan of Dr. Priestly's chart, has been made *in relief*. Dissected maps also have been introduced, not divided arbitrarily, as is usually done but according to the boundaries of countries. This is a most excellent way of giving children a correct idea of the size, shape and position of each country, and to the blind promises to be of great advantage.

For the financial affairs of the Institution, we would refer you to Appendix C, being the report of the Treasurer.

In conformity to law, we submit to you an inventory of the real estate, and of the moveable property of the Institution. On the whole property we have effected insurance to the amount of \$42,000.

The presses and apparatus for printing, are in good order, and there is a full stock of various kinds of type. These will be valuable at some future period, if they cannot be used now.

We have thus alluded to the state of all the various departments and interests of the Institution: but we cannot close without expressing our sense of gratitude to that overruling Providence which has kindly disposed the hearts of our legislators and the of public towards it, and which has been so favorably manifested since its very origin.

Only seven years ago this Institution was confined to an obscure room in an obscure street, where three or four blind children were learning to read: it had not only no property, but was in debt; it had no hope, except that of a successful appeal to the public:

the worldly wise smiled at the visionary attempt, and even the well disposed said, "we see no light to guide you."

But the appeal was made, and made successfully; for it went to the heart of a generous public, and an enlightened legislature. They said, let there be an Institution suitable for the blind, and there is one.

That it may continue to deserve and receive the confidence of the public, and the patronage of the legislature, is our sincere wish.

We have endeavored to place the Institution among the foremost of the kind in the world; we have endeavored to make it useful to the blind, and honorable to the Commonwealth, how far we have succeeded, you and the public must decide.

In closing this report, the Trustees would again acknowledge their obligation to the Director, Dr. Howe, to whom society is greatly indebted not only for his excellent management of this Institution, but for the important improvements he has introduced in the art of printing for the blind.

APPENDIX A.

List of Subscriptions for defraying the Expenses of removing the Institution to South Boston.

Samuel Appleton,	-	1000	George R. Russell,	-	25
F. C. Gray,	-	200	Dana, Evans & Co.	-	25
George Ticknor,	-	200	H. M. Haynes,	-	25
William H. Prescott,	-	100	Frederick Cabot,	-	25
John A. Lowell,	-	100*	Jabez C. Howe,	-	25
Francis Fisher,	-	50	David Wood,	-	25
Nathaniel Emmons,	-	50	George F. Haskins,	-	25
Charles Codman,	-	50	J. H. Pearson,	-	25
George Hallett,	-	50	B. W. Crowninshield,	-	20
T. B. Wales, jr.	-	25	Josiah Quincy, jr.	-	10
J. N. Howe, jr.	-	25			
S. G. Howe,	-	25			2005

Donations for the purpose of Printing for the Blind. Received in 1839.

Of Samuel May,	-	-	-	-	-	100
“ Dr. Shattuck,	-	-	-	-	-	100
“ Mrs. Joy,	-	-	-	-	-	50
“ a Stranger, by John Ball,	-	-	-	-	-	10
“ Mr. Picard, of Havana, (annual)	-	-	-	-	-	10
“ Mr. ———, stranger,	-	-	-	-	-	50
“ Mr. ———, stranger,	-	-	-	-	-	5
						325

* Received since closing the annual account of the Treasurer.

APPENDIX B.

The account given in the Report of Laura Bridgman, though sufficiently minute for conveying an idea of her situation and acquirements, is not sufficiently so for those who regard her case as interesting and important in a psychological point of view.

Such persons are assured that careful observations continue to be made, with a view to ascertaining the order of developements and the peculiar character of her intellectual faculties. The result will probably be made public, meantime, the following general observations, added to those in the last Reports, will serve to make out a general continuous history of the case.

Having mastered the manual alphabet of the deaf mutes, and learned to spell readily the names of every thing within her reach, she was then taught words expressive of positive qualities, as hardness, softness; and she readily learned to express the quality, by connecting the adjective hard on soft with the substantive; though she generally followed what one would suppose to be the natural order in the succession of ideas, placing the substantive first.

It was found too difficult, however, then to make her understand any general expression of quality, as hardness, softness in the abstract. Indeed, this is a process of mind most difficult of performance to any, especially to deaf mutes.

One of her earliest sentences after learning the adjectives was this—she had found the matron ill, and understood that her head pained her, so she said, “*Smith head sick—Laura sorry.*”

Next she was put to the positive expression of relation to place, which she could understand. For instance, a ring was taken and placed *on* a box, then the words were spelt to her, and she repeated them from imitation. Then the ring was placed *on* a hat, and a sign given her to spell, she spelt, *ring on box*—but being checked, and the right words given, she immediately began to exercise her judgment, and, as usual, seemed intently thinking. Then the same was repeated

with a bag, a desk, and a great many other things, until at last, she learned that she must name the thing *on* which the article was.

Then the same article was put *into* the box, and the words ring *in* box given her—this puzzled her for many minutes, and she would make mistakes ;—for instance, after she had learned to say correctly whether the ring was *on* or *in* a box, a drawer, a hat, a bucket, &c., if she were asked where is house, or matron, she would say *in* box. Cross questioning, however, is seldom necessary to ascertain whether she really understands the force of the words she is learning ;—for when the true meaning dawns upon her mind, the light spreads to her countenance.

In this case the preception seemed instantaneous, and the natural sign by which she expressed it was peculiar and striking: she spelt *o n*, then laid one hand *on* the other ; then she spelt, *i n t o*, and enclosed one hand *within* the other.

Some idea of the difficulty of teaching her common expressions, or the meaning of them, may be found from the fact that a lesson of two hours upon the words *right* and *left* was deemed very profitable, if she in that time really mastered the idea.

No definite course of instruction can be marked out, for her inquisitiveness is so great, that she is very much disconcerted if any question which occurs to her is deferred until the lesson is over. It is deemed best to gratify her, if her inquiry has any bearing on the lesson ; and often she leads her teacher far away from the objects he commenced with.

For instance picking up a nail in one of her lessons she instantly asked its name, and it being spelt, she was dissatisfied, and thought the teacher had made a mistake, for she knew *n a i l* stood for her finger nail, and she was very anxious to go to head quarters, to be sure the teacher was right.

She often asks questions which unfortunately cannot be satisfactorily answered to her, for it is painful to excite such a vivid curiosity as now exists in her mind, and then baulk it. For instance, she once asked with much eagerness why one arrangement of letters was not as good as another to express the name of a thing ; as why *t a c*, should not express the idea of the animal, as well as *c a t*. This she expressed partly by signs, and partly by words, but her meaning was perfectly clear ; she was puzzled and wished an explanation.

An extract from the diary kept by her instructor, will give an idea of her manner of questioning.

December 3.

"Spent one hour in giving Laura an idea of the meaning of the words left and right. She readily conceived that left hand, meant *her* left hand, but with difficulty generalized the term. At last however she caught the idea, and eagerly spelt the name of her arms, hands, fingers, feet, ears, &c., as they were touched, and named them, right or left, as might be; suddenly pausing however, and looking puzzled, she put her finger on her *nose*, and asked if that were left or right; thus she continually puzzles one: but such is her eagerness to find out one's meaning, such a zealous co-operation is there on her part, that it is a delightful task to teach her."

"Uses today freely the prepositions *in* and *on*: she says, teacher sitting *in* sofa:—do not dare to correct her in such cases of anomalous usage of the preposition, but prefer to let her be in error, than shake her faith in a rule given: the corrections must be made by and by: the sofa having sides, she naturally says *in*."

In her eagerness to advance her knowledge of words and to communicate her ideas she coins words, and is always guided by analogy. Sometimes her process of *word-making* is very interesting; for instance, after some time spent in giving her an idea of the abstract meaning of *alone*, she seemed to obtain it, and understanding that being *by one's self* was to be alone, or *al-one*. She was told to go to her chamber, or school, or elsewhere and return *alone*; she did so, but soon after, wishing to go with one of the little girls, she strove to express her meaning thus, Laura go *al-two*.

The same eagerness is manifested in her attempts to define for the purpose of classification: for instance, some one giving her the word bachelor she came to her teacher for a definition, she was taught that men who had wives were *husbands*, those who had none, *bachelors*; when asked if she understood she said "*man no have wife-bachelor—Tenny bachelor*: referring to an old friend of hers. Being told to define bachelor, she said "*bachelor, no have wife, and smoke pipe*." Thus she considered the individual peculiarity of smoking in one person, as a specific mark of the *species bachelor*.

Then in order to test her knowledge of the word, it was said by her teacher Tenny has got no wife, what is Tenny? She paused, and then said, *Tenny is wrong!*

The word widow being explained to her, a woman whose

husband is dead, and she being called upon to define she said, "*widow is woman, man dead, and cold,*" and eked out her meaning, by sinking down, and dropping her hand, to signify *in the ground*.

The two last words she added herself, they not having been in the definition: but she instantly associates the idea of *coldness* and *burial* with death.

Her having acquired any idea of death was not by the wish of her teacher, it having been his intention to reserve the subject until such a developement of her reason should be attained as would enable him to give a correct idea of it.

He hopes still, by aid of the analogy of the germination and growth of plants, to give her a consoling hope of resurrection, to counterbalance the almost instinctive dread of death.

She had touched a dead body before she came to the Institution.

She easily acquired a knowledge and use of active verbs, especially those expressive of *tangible action*; as to walk, to run, to sew, to shake.

At first, of course, no distinction could be made of mood and tense, she used the words in a general sense, and according to the order of her *sense of ideas*; thus, in asking some one to give her bread, she would first use the word expressive of the leading idea, and say "*Laura, bread, give.*" If she wanted water she would say *water, drink, Laura*.

Soon, however, she learned the use of the auxiliary verbs, of the difference of past, present and future tense; for instance, here is an early sentence, *Keller is sick—when will Keller well*; the use of *be* she had not acquired.

Having acquired the use of substantives, adjectives, verbs, prepositions and conjunctions, it was deemed time to make the experiment of trying to teach her to *write*, and to show her that she might communicate her ideas to persons not in contact with her.

It was amusing to witness the mute amazement with which she submitted to the process, the docility with which she imitated every motion, and the perseverance with which she moved her pencil over and over again in the same track, until she could form the letter. But when at last the idea dawned upon her, that by this mysterious process she could make other people understand what she thought, her joy was boundless.

Never did a child apply more eagerly and joyfully to any task than she did to this, and in a few months she could

make every letter distinctly, and separate words from each other.

The following anecdote will give an idea of her fondness for teasing, or innocent fun or mischief. Her teacher looking one day unobserved into the girls' play room, saw three blind girls playing with the rockinghorse. Laura was on the crupper, another in the saddle, and a third clinging on the neck, and they were all in high glee, swinging backward and forward as far as the rockers would roll. There was a peculiarly arch look in Laura's countenance—the natural language of sly fun. She seemed prepared to give a spring, and suddenly when her end was lowest, and the others were perched high in the air, she sidled quickly off on to the floor, and down went the other end so swiftly as to throw the girls off the horse.

This Laura evidently expected, for she stood a moment convulsed with laughter, then ran eagerly forward with outstretched hands to find the girls, almost screamed with joy. As soon, however, as she got hold of one of them, she perceived that she was hurt, and instantly her countenance changed, she seemed shocked and grieved, and after caressing and comforting her playmate, she found the other, and seemed to apologise by spelling the word—*wrong*, and caressing her.

When she can puzzle her teacher she is pleased and often purposely spells a word wrong with a playful look; and if she catch her teacher in a mistake, she bursts into an ecstasy of laughter.

When her teacher had been at work giving her an idea of the words carpenter, chair maker, painter, &c., in a generic sense, and told her that blacksmith made *nails*, she instantly held up her fingers and asked if blacksmith made them, though she knew well he did not.

With little girls of her own age she is full of frolic and fun, and no one enjoys a game at *romps* more than Laura.

She has the same fondness for a dress, for ribbons, and for finery as other girls of her age, and as a proof that it arises from the same amiable desire of pleasing others, it may be remarked that whenever she has a new bonnet or any new article of dress, she is particularly desirous to go to meeting, or to go out with it. If people do not notice it, she directs their attention by placing their hand upon it.

Generally she indicates her preference for such visitors as are the best dressed.

She is so much in company with blind persons that she thinks blindness common, and when first meeting a person she asks if they are blind, or she feels of their eyes.

She evidently knows that the blind differ from seeing persons, for when she shows blind persons any thing she always puts their fingers on it.

She seems to have a perception of character, and to have no esteem for those who have little intellect. The following anecdote is significant of her perception of character, and shews that from her friends she requires something more than good-natured indulgence.

A new scholar entered school—a little girl about Laura's age. She was very helpless, and Laura took great pride and great pains in showing her the way about the house, assisting her to dress and undress, and doing for her many things which she could not do herself.

In a few weeks it began to be apparent even to Laura, that the child was not only helpless but naturally very stupid, being almost an idiot. Then Laura gave her up in despair and avoided her, and has ever since had an aversion to being with her, passing her by as if in contempt. By a natural association of ideas she attributes to this child all those countless deeds which Mr. *Nobody* does in every house—if a chair is broken, or any thing is misplaced and no one knows who did it, Laura attributes it at once to this child.

It has been observed before that she is familiar with the processes of addition and subtraction in small numbers. Subtracting one number from another puzzled her for a time, but by help of objects she accomplished it. She can count and conceive objects to about one hundred in number—to express an indefinitely great number, or more than she can count she says, *hundred*. If she thought a friend was to be absent many years she would say—will come hundred *Sundays*—meaning weeks. She is pretty accurate in measuring time, and seems to have an intuitive tendency to do it. Unaided by the changes of night and day, by the light, or the sound of any timepiece, she nevertheless divides time accurately.

With the days of the week, and the week itself as a whole she is perfectly familiar; for instance, if asked her what day will it be in fifteen days more, she readily names the day of the week. The day she divides by the commencement and end of school, by the recesses, and by the arrival of meal-times.

She goes to bed punctually at seven o'clock, and of her own accord. For some time after she came under our charge she had some one to put her to bed every night; but soon it was thought best to send her alone, and that she might

not wait for any one, she was left alone one evening and she sat until quite late, a person watching her : and at last she seemed to form her resolution suddenly—she jumped up and groped her way up to bed. From that time to this she has never required to be told to go to bed, but at the arrival of the hour for retiring, she goes by herself.

Those persons who hold that the capacity of perceiving and measuring the lapse of time is an innate and distinct faculty of the mind, may deem it an important fact that Laura evidently can measure time so accurately as to distinguish between a half and whole note of music.

Seated at the pianoforte she will strike the notes in a measure like the following, quite correctly.



Now it will be perceived that she must have clear perception of lapse of time in order to strike the two eighths at the right instant, for in the first measure they occur at the second beat, in the second measure at the third beat.

There is no doubt that practice will enable her to subdivide time still more minutely. Possibly some attach an undue degree of importance to this power of measuring time, considered in a metaphysical point of view, for any one may make the same experiment upon himself, and by stopping his ears and closing his eyes, will find he can measure time, or the *duration of his sensation*, and know which of two periods is longest ; nevertheless we shall continue carefully to note the phenomena in the case of Laura for the benefit of whom they may concern.

It is interesting in a physiological point of view to know the effect of the deprivation of three senses upon the remaining two.

The sense of smell being destroyed, it seems a curious question whether the effect upon the organ of taste is general or particular. That is, whether the taste is blunted generally, and for all things alike, or whether one kind of sapidity is more effected than another : to ascertain this some experiments have been tried but as yet not enough to enable one to state confidently the results in minute distinction. The general conclusions are these.

Acids seem to make vivid and distinct impression upon the taste, and she apparently distinguishes the different degrees of acidity, better than of sweetness or bitterness. She

can distinguish between wine, cider and vinegar, better than substances like manna, liquorice and sugar. Of bit-
ters she seems to have less perception or indeed hardly any, for on putting powdered rhubarb into her mouth she called it *tea*, and on one saying *no*, and telling her to taste *close*, she evidently did try to taste it but still called it tea, and spit it out—but without any contortion or any indication of its being particularly disagreeable.

Of course she has a repugnance to these kind of experiments, and it seems almost imposing upon her good-nature to push them very far ; we shall however be soon able to ascertain certainly how far she can distinguish different sapid bodies. Those who are curious in the physiology of the taste know that the highest degree of *gusto*, or the achme of pleasure, is not obtained until just as the morsel has slipped over the glottis, and is on its way beyond power of recall down the oesophagus. This seems to be a wise precaution of nature to prevent the stomach being cheated of its due, for if the highest degree in pleasure of eating could be obtained without absolutely swallowing the morsel—the epicure could have an exhaustless source of pleasure and need never degenerate into the *gourmand*.

Some physiologists who have speculated upon this subject, consider that this final climax of the pleasure of taste is produced by a fine aroma which rising from the morcel, and mounting up the fauces pleasantly titilates the ramifications of the olfactory nerve. The fact that when we have a cold in the head, and the fauces are obstructed, the taste blunted seems to bear out this supposition ; but from some observations on Laura, one would be inclined to think that some other cause must contribute to the effect.

She appears to care less for the process of mastication than deglutition ; and probably it is only the necessity of mechanical trituration of food, which induces her to go through with it, before hastening to the pleasant part of swallowing. Now as the imperfection of smell impairs the taste in the tongue and palate during mastication, it should have the same effect in deglutition, supposing this theory to be correct : but it seems not to be so—else Laura would have little inducement to swallow—save to fill a vacuity of stomach. Now it seems doubtful whether the feeling of vacuity of stomach, strictly speaking, would show a child the road for the food, or whether it would not be as likely to stuff bread into its ear, as into its mouth—if it had no pleasurable sensation in tasting ; and further, if the pleasurable sen-

sation did not increase and tempt to deglutition, it is doubtful whether hunger or vacuity of stomach *alone* would teach a child to swallow the chewed morsel.

On the whole she seems to care less for eating than most children of her age.

With regard to the sense of touch it is very acute—even for a blind person. It is shown remarkably in the readiness with which she distinguishes persons: there are forty inmates in the female wing, with all of whom of course Laura is acquainted; whenever she is walking through the passages, she perceives by the jar of the floor, or the agitation of the air, that some one is near her, and it is exceedingly difficult to pass her without being recognised. Her little arms are stretched out, and the instant she grasps a hand, a sleeve, or even part of the dress, she knows the person and lets them pass on with some sign of recognition.

The innate desire for knowledge, and the instinctive efforts which the human faculties make to exercise their functions is shown most remarkably in Laura. Her tiny fingers are to her as eyes, and ears, and nose, and most deftly and incessantly does she keep them in motion: like the feelers of some insects which are continually agitated, and which touch every grain of sand in the path, so Laura's arms and hands are continually in play; and when she is walking with a person she not only recognises every thing she passes within touching distance, but by continually touching her companion's hands she ascertains what he is doing. A person walking across a room while she had hold on his left arm, would find it hard to take a pencil out of his waistcoat pocket with his right hand, without her perceiving it.

Her judgment of distances and of relations of place is very accurate; she will rise from her seat, go straight towards a door, put out her hand just at the right time, and grasp the handle with precision.

When she runs against a door which is shut, but which she expected to find open, she does not fret, but rubs her head and laughs, as though she perceived the ludicrous position of a person flat against a door trying to walk through it.

The constant and tireless exercise of her feelers gives her a very accurate knowledge of every thing about the house; so that if a new article, a bundle, bandbox or even a new book is laid any where in the apartments which she frequents, it would be but a short time before in her cease-

less rounds she would find it, and from something about it she would generally discover to whom it belonged.

She perceives the approach of persons by the undulations of the air striking her face ; and she can distinguish the step of those who tread hard, and jar the floor.

At table, if told to be still, she sits and conducts herself with propriety ; handles her cup, spoon, and fork, like other children ; so that a stranger looking at her would take her for a very pretty child with a green ribbon over her eyes.

But when at liberty to do as she chooses, she is continually feeling of things, and ascertaining their size, shape, density, and use—asking their names and their purposes, going on with insatiable curiosity, step by step, towards knowledge.

Thus doth her active mind, though all silent and darkling within, commune by means of her one sense with things external, and gratify its innate craving for knowledge by close and ceaseless attention.

Qualities and appearances, unappreciable or unheeded by others, are to her of great significance and value ; and by means of these her knowledge of external nature and physical relations will in time become extensive.

If the same success shall attend the cultivation of her moral nature, as has followed that of her intellect and her perceptive faculties, great will be the reward to her, and most interesting will be the results to others.

APPENDIX C.

Dr. *R. D. Tucker in account with the Perkins Institution for the Education of the Blind.* Cr.

1839 Jan. 19.		1840 Jan. 1.	
To amount of funds on hand, -	2,981 15	By amount paid for board, fuel, wash-	6,452 00
" " deposited in Boston Bank, -	9,200 00	" salaries of Officers, -	3,280 68
" 9 shares in New England Bank, -	900 00	" repairs in 1838, Pearl Street, -	642 29
		" for Printing, -	1,272 40
" amount received donations for re-	13,081 15	" " Musical Instruments, -	457 28
moval, -		Medicines, -	49 98
" amount on account of Printing fund, -	2,005 00	Printing Annual Report and Adver-	92 34
" " sundry small donations, -	333 00	tising, -	160 00
" " of sales of floor cloths at	15 00	" Insurance, -	69 00
Pearl street, -	100 75	" for an out boarder, -	
" amount of sale of old Piano, -	21 94	" bills for alteration at South Boston,	5,627 97
" " of Steam Works, -	95 00		
" " from States for appropriations, -	9,348 93		
" " of pay of pupils, -	483 25	" amount on deposit, -	18,103 87
" " of Bank dividends, -	284 00	" " 9 shares N. E. Bank, -	7,500 00
" " Concerts, -	805 75	" " cash balance, -	900 00
			69 90
	26,573 77		26,573 77

OFFICERS
OF THE
CORPORATION,
FOR 1840.

PRESIDENT,
PETER C. BROOKS.

VICE PRESIDENT,
THOMAS H. PERKINS,

TREASURER,
PETER R. DALTON.

SECRETARY,
SAMUEL G. HOWE.

TRUSTEES,
EDWARD BROOKS,
THOMAS G. CARY,
SAMUEL A. ELIOT,
JOHN D. FISHER,
OZIAS GOODWIN,
JOHN HOMANS,
SAMUEL P. LOUD,
HORACE MANN,
SAMUEL MAY,
JAMES K. MILLS,
ROBERT RANTOUL,
ROBERT C. WINTHROP.

FAC SIMILE

of the

Handwriting and composition* of Laura Bridgman.

have tra will l u r i t o
 lo t l e t l o m o b h o n.
 have tra with l r i d e w i
 with h e a t h e r. have tra
 will m a l c o h u r s e
 for and t h e r l a u r a
 will a l o e f u w i t h
 m o t h e r o f n o f a t h e r
 m o t h e r w i l l l o v e
 o a n d l i v i n g h a u r a. n o w
 have tra w i l l e a r t y.
 l e t t e r f o r m o t h e r.
 have tra w i l l e g s e e u n l e s
 have tra w i l l g o h o m e.

*Not the slightest correction or addition has been made, save inserting the punctuation.

